

## **Comprehensive Plan Amendment Steering Committee Notes July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2006**

**Steering Committee Members Present:** Joe Plankis, Jim Kent, John Carey, Jack Bonham, John Boyer, Karen Newberry, Bob Smith, Larry Snapp

**Steering Committee Members Absent:** Jen Smith, Gloria Del Greco, Bob Horkay

**Others present:** Greg Dale, Teree Bergman, Kevin Buchheit, Tom Higgins, Al Salzman, Ann Cavaluzzi, Ron Thomas, Teresa Otis Skelton, Cindy Spoljaric, Brian Morales, Kevin Todd, John Dipple, Beau Wilfong and son, Jerry Rosenberger, Bryan Stumpf, Melody Sweat, Ken Kingshill, Andy Cook, and Mic Mead

The meeting started at 7:03

### **Greg Dale:**

- We are here to discuss process issues
- How do we go forward?
- Are the consultants a productive part of the process?
- We have seen indicators of potential problems.
- We are not insiders to Westfield
- As outsiders we are noticing patterns and trends that concern us.

### **The Issues:**

- Process got off on the wrong foot. Staff and consultants charged to get information. Problem with being short staffed.
- Confusion of the scope of the project. Should we completely rework the plan or should we refine/edit the plan? What is the magnitude of this process?
- Continued confusion/disagreement of the role of the steering committee in the process. Who writes the plan? Steering committee or consultants with the input of the steering committee?
- Steering committee complaints about lack of coordination and communication.
- Large amount of behind the scenes communication. Other planning processes the consultants have worked on have less behind the scenes communication
- Disconnect between steering committee and town staff. Lack of communication and lots of distrust.
- Poor reaction to consultant's first draft. Steering committee felt the draft missed a lot.
- High level of distrust among groups. Don't know which groups are involved.

**Greg Dale:**

- Are we on the right path?
- Doesn't look like this process will end well.
- Consultants want a good fair process; everyone is not going to get everything they want.
- Without potential action or thought, this is not a healthy process
- Consultant is not casting blame.

**Bob Smith:**

- We are zoning not comprehensive planning
- Comprehensive plan should be fluid.
- Opportunities could be missed if the comprehensive plan is too rigid/ specific.  
Ex. Bridgewater

**Greg Dale:**

- I agree with you Bob.
- Subcommittees were doing a lot of zoning work.
- Separate the comprehensive plan from implementation/zoning issues
- Breakout reports were very zoning/ site specific based
- A comprehensive plan is less parcel specific.

**Jack Bonham:**

- Shows lack of trust, the wanting for more regulations
- Residents want the certainty when buying property.

**Greg Dale:** Predictability versus flexibility

**Karen Newberry:**

- I agree with the issues the consultant addressed.
- I feel sorry that you are in the middle
- Resident mistrust of town policies
- Consultant is led by town
- Steering committee is spoon fed, no hard data
- This is the reason we lost some steering committee members
- I didn't this we would totally revise the current plan
- Town doesn't follow the public wishes, so we need a more specific plan to circumvent that. Ex 161<sup>st</sup> and Springmill
- Want to hold future council's accountable

- Consultant gathers info into a draft and steering committee tweaks it.
- Consultants led by town, leads to more mistrust
- I agree that there is distrust between the steering committee and staff
- I am not as displeased as others with the draft
- Draft needs more bite
- Town council policies are not logical or reasonable to the public
- Feel like I am in Jr. High again

**Greg Dale:**

- Town hasn't led the consultants
- Two competing processes?
- What are we arguing about?
- Not substantive issues
- Mistrust for mistrust's sake.

**Larry Snapp:**

- Comprehensive plan is a guideline
- Town council has a right to reject the comprehensive plan policies
- Trying to correct things in comprehensive plan that need to be corrected at the poles

**Greg Dale:**

- Plan is a policy/guideline document
- Community is trying to a land use map type approach
- Has not worked well in history
- Need to define circumstances under which things can happen

**Teree Bergman:**

- In Indiana- no way to compel Town officials or plan commission to be consistent with the plan.
- There is much stronger coordination between the plan and elected officials in other states.
- If there is consensus, the plan is much less likely to be overlooked
- The more time between plan updates, the fuzzier the policy gets.
- I felt we were close- then not

**Bob Smith:**

- We are laymen trying to do a professional job

- Not listening to our experienced professionals
- Elected officials don't know everything.

**Greg Dale:**

- That doesn't mean that we don't want your input
- We help facilitate the process
- We don't have local understanding
- We are just trying to identify the cracks in the underlying fault line
- All issues have the potential to be fixed

**Joe Plankis:**

- Steering committee talked about having implementation ( ordinance) items to support the plan
- Prioritize issues found in comprehensive plan for zoning ordinance update
- Greg will put policies in plan to identify implementation strategies
- Explain changes in policy by elected officials to the public

**Jim Carey:**

- The first comprehensive plan seemed awfully easy
- We left out 32 and 31 corridors, but did everything else
- We weren't questioned, there is a lot finger pointing this time.

**Greg Dale:** This one is harder because we are dealing with specifics?

**John Carey:** Yes

**Jack Bonham:** When writing the first plan we didn't think we would grow this fast.

**Teree Bergman:** As you do more plans they usually get harder

**Jim Kent:**

- We have had a huge public input in this process
- People are more vocal and invested
- Mistrust will always be there

**Jack Bonham:** We also have a lot more people.

**Jim Kent:**

- Town-city dynamic
- Elections

**Larry Snapp:** The good thing is more people are involved

**Teree Bergman:**

- The plan needs to create a set of policies to evaluate projects, either good or bad.
- Policies need to give reasons why projects are good or bad
- Policies will impart principles important to the community

**John Boyer:**

- I still think that the town is leading the consultants
- The town represents small amount of residents
- The steering committee tries to be impartial
- Steering committee in conflict with town on major issues
- Carmel tries to annex us because people were unhappy with town policies
- Steering committee should steer not be a rubber stamp

**Jim Carey:**

- Don't want to have to go through this process in another 5 years.
- It shows we did the first plan wrong

**Larry Snapp:**

- We are not redoing the plan because it was wrong
- Things change, and you need to change policies to reflect that

**Greg Dale:**

- Growth causes great change
- You look at a 20 year outlook, but need to update it every five years,
- Evaluate policies every one or two years.

**Joe Plankis:** You can update between 1 to five years? Example Wilfong Project

**Greg Dale:**

- Yes
- Change policies to learn from mistakes or evaluate new development
- Natural process
- Can we help you with this process? Are we needed?

**Joe Plankis:**

- I have no problems with the consultants
- Greg and Teree handled process well, despite circumstances that cause them to be ineffective
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**Karen Newberry, Larry Snapp and Bob Smith agreed**

**John Boyer:** I am personally surprised that the town is not driving the consultants

**Greg Dale:** No town steering outside of this process. Want a good, fair process

**Joe Plankis:**

- I work with Greg and Kevin
- No direction is set prior to meetings
- Greg and I do the agenda
- Staff gets data, communication

**Jack Bonham:**

- Those with the experience need to say if this plan is functional or dysfunctional
- What is a relevant and reasonable plan?

**Greg Dale:**

- We urge a fiscal component to evaluate the impact of the plan
- We don't do this
- This will be a recommended implementation step
- Fiscal modeling
- Next steps? Make revisions to draft with breakout group input, resolve large policy issues
- Rural versus suburban. Is the will there? Land use vs. utilities

**Bob Smith:**

- Former council decisions effect current officials- need to pay the bills
- More than just your backyard

**Karen Newbery:**

- I represent the people I represent on the steering committee
- This plan needs some benefits to public the steering committee is representing
- Who is making the decisions is important
- Current plan is open to misinterpretation

- Can't be all flexible or it will be abused

**Jack Bonham:** You can't satisfy all groups

**Greg Dale:**

- Breakout drafts are very different
- Very s[specific or general
- Should both be in plan?
- Reconciliation between the two.

**Larry Snapp:**

- Plan is guideline for town council
- Not a flap jacket for those who live here
- Move on

**Jack Bonham:** What are we doing next week?

**Greg Dale:**

- List major policy issues for resolution- 1 or 2 meetings
- Redraft flagging issues that need further discussion
- Staff comparison

**Joe Plankis:**

- Comparisons on back burner
- Policy discussion

**Jack Bonham:**

- Steering committee really work on tasks
- Forget public input for whole meeting
- Public is invited, but it is our meeting

**Greg Dale:**

- Public works better venue- constructive to discussion
- I will list a starting point for discussion
- Steering committee can add other issues
- Send email updates to everyone

The meeting ended at 8:10

